

Disposition of Remains Report: Melbourne, Australia

PART I. Name of Country: Australia

The consular district of Melbourne includes the States of Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania, and the Northern Territory

PART II. U.S. Consulate General Information

U.S. Consulate General Melbourne

Address: 553 St. Kilda Road, Melbourne, Victoria 3004, Australia

Switchboard : (613) 9526-5900. Consular Section Fax No: (613) 9525-0769

Website: <http://melbourne.usconsulate.gov/melbourne/>

American Citizen Services Unit E-mail: MelbourneACS@state.gov

State Department Country Specific Information:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/cis/cis_954.html

State Department Travel Information:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/cis_pa_tw/tw/tw_1764.html

Registration with the U.S. Embassy:

http://travel.state.gov/travel/tips/registration/registration_1186.html

PART III.

(1) Maximum period before burial:

There is no specific legal period within which the burial must take place regardless of whether the remains have been embalmed or not.

(2) Embalming:

Embalming is only required by regulation when remains are to be exported. Embalming facilities are available in all the major funeral establishments in Melbourne, Adelaide and the Northern Territory. Funeral Directors in Alice Springs send remains to Adelaide for cremation and that attracts additional air freight, which accounts for the disparity between cremations in Darwin vice those in Alice Springs.

NOTE: Victoria permits embalming in cases where death was due to HIV infection and Hepatitis C.

(3) Cremation:

Cremation is permitted under local and national law and there are several crematoriums in Victoria, South Australia, Tasmania, and one in Darwin. There is no crematorium in Alice Springs. Crematoriums report that cremains are a fine ash similar to that in the U.S.

(4) Caskets and Containers:

Export quality caskets and shipping containers, which meet the requirements of 7 FAM 260, are available in Melbourne, Adelaide, Hobart, Darwin, Alice Springs.

(5) Exportation of Remains:

Human ashes: To export ashes, the following documents are required:

- (a) Australian death certificate or Coroner's certificate permitting disposal;
- (b) Cremation certificate issued by the crematorium;

- (c) Packing certificate issued by the crematorium or funeral director certifying that the container contains only the cremated remains;
- (d) Consular Mortuary Certificate issued by the Consular Officer (required by the airlines as per Air Cargo Tariff rules issued IATA Netherlands).

Human remains: To export remains, the following documents are required:

- (a) Australian death certificate or Coroner's certificate permitting disposal;
- (b) Embalming certificate issued by the funeral director;
- (c) Packing certificate issued by the funeral director;
- (d) Infectious diseases certificate issued by the Department of Health certifying that there were no infectious diseases in plague proportions in the State at the time of the death;
- (e) Export authorization issued by the Department of Health/Human Services;
- (f) Consular Mortuary Certificate issued by the Consular Officer.

(6) Costs:

Charges shown are based on the Consulate General exchange rate of October 24, 2008 (US\$1=Aus\$1.622). All costs are approximate and are based on quotations received in October 2008.

Local burial: *(Total cost includes collection and transportation of remains, preparation, median price-range casket, funeral home charges, burial plot and interment, all documentation and administrative fees. It does not include a press notice, flowers, or a religious service):*

Melbourne	A\$7,730	US\$4,650
Adelaide, South Australia	A\$6,650	US\$4,000
Tasmania	A\$7,480	US\$4,500
Northern Territory: Darwin	A\$7,150	US\$4,300
Alice Springs	A\$7,150	US\$4,300

Cremation & Disposal of Ashes: *(Total cost includes preparation of remains, crematorium fee, collection and transportation of cremains, packing, documentation, mailing and administrative fees. It does not include a press notice, flowers, or a religious service):*

Melbourne	A\$6,235	US\$3,750
Adelaide, South Australia	A\$3,325	US\$2,000
Tasmania	\$4,570	US\$2,750
Northern Territory: Darwin	A\$5,820	US\$3,500
Alice Springs	A\$8,290	US\$4,985

Shipment of Remains: *(Air freight costs are from Qantas Air Freight and based on 150 kg as an average weight. The total cost includes all funeral director fees for collection and transportation of remains, embalming, shipping casket, U.S. regulation shipping container, airfreight, all documentation and administrative fees)*

From	To		
	San Francisco	Chicago	New York
Melbourne	A\$10,570	A\$10,385	A\$10,545
	US\$6,200	US\$6,400	US\$6,500

Adelaide, South Australia	A\$10,920 US\$6,730	A\$11,275 US\$6,950	A\$11,395 US\$7,025
Tasmania	A\$11,235 US\$6,925	A\$11,600 US\$7,150	A\$11,695 US\$7,210
Northern Territory: Darwin	A\$11,355 US\$7,000	A\$11,925 US\$7,350	A\$12,165 US\$7,500
Alice Springs	A\$12,940 US\$7,975	A\$13,285 US\$8,190	A\$13,385 US\$8,250

- (7) **Exhumation and shipment:** A permit issued by the Department of Health is required before an exhumation can take place. It could take up to four weeks, sometimes longer, to receive this clearance. There is no time period before which an exhumation is permissible. Related paperwork and exhumation costs are approximately USD3,000.
- (8) **Autopsy:** If the circumstances of the death falls within the meaning of "Reportable Death" as outlined in the Coroner's Act 1985 (all non-natural causes of death), the Coroner will begin an investigation to establish the medical cause of death. The time taken to establish the medical cause of death may take up to ten weeks because of microbiology, anatomical histology, toxicology and pharmacology testing. Any member of the person's family, their doctor or attorney, can request a copy of the autopsy report.

Objecting to an autopsy: The next-of-kin has the right to object to an autopsy being performed (religious reasons etc.) If the coroner decides that an autopsy *will be* performed, the NOK can apply to the Supreme Court for an order preventing it. This must be done within 48 hours of the NOK being notified that their objection to an autopsy has been refused.

- (9) **Remarks:**
- Death certificate:** Once the medical cause of death is ascertained and the body is released to the funeral director, the coroner's office passes information on to the Registry of Deaths so that the death can be registered. The Registry is responsible for issuing an official death certificate. In cases where the death is subject to a coroner's investigation, the coroner's office will issue a document permitting "cremation, burial or other disposal". The official death certificate will be issued when the coroner's investigation is completed (as stated earlier this could take as long as ten weeks.)

Organ donation: Organ donation can only take place if the death has occurred in certain circumstances: the person must have died in hospital, usually in intensive care and always on a ventilator, so that their circulatory system is still intact. This means that organ donation is *not* a possibility in most coroners' cases.